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A true Discovery
O F T H E
C O N D U C T
O F

Receivers and Thief-Takers

In and about the

CITY of L O N D O N;

To the Multiplication, and Encouragement
of Thieves, House-Breakers, and other loose and
Disorderly Persons.

Design'd as Preparatory to a larger Treatise, wherein shall
be propos'd Methods to extirpate and suppress for the
future such villanous Practices.

Humbly Dedicated to the

Lord-Mayor, Aldermen and Common-Council.

By CHARLES HITCHIN, One of the Marshals of
the CITY of L O N D O N.

L O N D O N:

Printed for the A U T H O R, and Given away Gratis. 1718.

OF THE
COUNCIL
OF THE
CITY OF LONDON



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Humbly Dedicated to the

Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Common Council

CHARLES WILKINSON, One of the Masters of
the CITY OF LONDON

LONDON:
Printed for the AUTHOR, and Sold by G. G. & Co. 1782

To the Right Honourable

Sir William Lewen, Knt.

Lord Mayor

O F T H E

CITY of L O N D O N,

And to the Right Worshipful the

A L D E R M E N,

And to the

Gentlemen of the Common-Council of the same CITY.

May it please your Lordship,



A M very sensible of my Unfitness to appear in print, being conscious of my Incapacity to put what I have offered in a good and elegant Stile, having till I undertook to serve the City in the Office I am now in, employ'd my self in a Business that did not admit of time to make such Improvements in Literature as might have enabled me to greater Perspicuity and Clearness of expression. But as the nature of my Office directed and employ'd me about those unhappy People, whose vicious and evil Courses are no less destructive to the Peace and Safety of this Honourable City, than to their own Welfare and Happiness, if they would duly consider it; From a desire to reform the Persons, and for the common Good and Peace of this whole City, and also the better to answer the purport of my Office, I have in the Exercise thereof spent my time to find out the Ways and Courses of loose and profligate Persons, and employed my Thoughts in Methods to reform and suppress them; and therefore cannot urge my aforesaid Inabilities as a sufficient Plea to conceal

The DEDICATION.

what I think is much for the Interest of my Country and this City in particular to discover, especially at a time, when the City and Places adjacent seem to be over-run with Sharpers and loose Persons; and when a Scheme and Proposal of this nature has been thought necessary, and of great use at this time by the Right Reverend the Bishops, the Judges, the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, the Right Worshipful the Aldermen, the Gentlemen of the Common-Council, and many other eminent and good Citizens.

As the Vertue and Efficacy of Laws are chiefly in the possibility and easiness of their Execution; this, besides the well grounded Opinion I have, that this Scheme will be effectual to the intended Purposes, is a very great Inducement to make it publick, that its Execution will be in the Hands of Officers, Persons as well as others annoy'd and aggriev'd by the Irregularities intended to be thereby redress'd; and those Officers under the Direction of the whole City, as being of their own chusing: viz. each High Constable with the rest of the Peace Officers in his Division to his Assistance.

I cannot but promise my self, that this short Scheme, if in all things pursued with Vigour, will destroy both Thief and Receiver, and as the Souls as well as the Bodies of those deluded People are endangered by their evil Courses; I shall here intreat the Assistance of the Reverend Clergy; for as they have been Encouragers of the Charity Schools, a firm and good Foundation for Piety and Goodness, and withal a great Obstacle to those Irregularities; I hope they will keep us Company by encouraging and exhorting the proper Officers to their Duties, and when those hardened Sinners feel the Magistrates Rod, find that their Practices are detected, and no Encouragement in their evil ways, they will be brought to sober thinking, and drawn to a more constant attendance on their Duty to God and his Ordinances, and will thereby give the Clergy an Opportunity to convert them from the Errors of their Ways, and to reap, as we may all reasonably hope, in a small time, a plentiful Harvest, viz. the Reformation of Thousands of Souls.

I am, with the greatest Respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordships much obliged

and most dutiful Servant,

Charles Hitchin.

A Discovery of the Conduct of Thieves and Thief-Takers.



these should hold their Peace, the Stones in the Street would cry out of such abominable Practices as are committed and carried on, in the City, and Places adjacent, by Thieves and Robbers, and such as have assumed to themselves the Title of *Thief-Takers*, &c. And there being several Matters of the greatest consequence to the Kingdom in general, and to the Citizens in particular, which are now depending. It is therefore hoped that effectual Care will be taken, to have the same strictly examined into, for that One Thief-Taker brought to Justice, is more for the Advantage of the City, than a hundred Thieves, &c. And in order thereto, I shall here take notice of only One of the aforesaid felonious Practices, taking it for granted, that all the rest are of the same Management; to wit. a Gentlewoman, as she was passing along in the Evening in a Coach, on the South Side of St. Paul's Church-Yard, was there, in the most audacious and barbarous manner, attack'd and robb'd to a considerable Value, by three of the most notorious Rogues that ever this Kingdom were plagued with. Which being discover'd, and sought after, in order to bring them to Justice for so doing; the *Thief-Taker* hearing of the same, and fearing that he might, by this means, lose three of the most profitable Customers which belong'd to his felonious Shop, immediately summoned the three aforesaid Offenders to a friendly Conference, where it was unanimously agreed, that the only way to save them, at this critical Juncture, was for one of them to make himself an Evidence, &c. Well then, saith the *Thief-Taker*, in order to blind the Justice, and that he may rake the Information, is to induce him to believe that we are doing something for the good of the Publick: Therefore. you must put into the Information, a numerous train of Offenders, which have been concern'd with you, either in Robberies, or buying or receiving of your stolen Goods; and at the same time you must be sure to promise him, the said Justice, that you will convict them all; and that there may be a perfect Harmony between us, you shall hear

hear me your Counsellor, your Friend, your Thief-Taker and Factor, promise as faithfully, that I will apprehend, take, and bring them to Justice for the same. But by the bye, I must give you this Caution, that you do not put such and such Robberies into the Information, because I was imployed by the Persons that you robbed, to get them their Goods again; and they not bidding Money enough for the same, they were not returned to the right Owner, therefore you know, such must be left out, otherwise I shall bring my own Neck into the Noose, and put it in the Power of every little Prigg, as well as others, to pull the Cord at their pleasure, and upon such Terms, who the Devil will be your Factor? And now let us see, what is the Consequence of this Skitish and Felonious Information, but deceiving the Magistrate, and letting the three aforesaid notorious Offenders escape the Hand of Justice, and to give the Thief-Taker a Reward of Fourscore Pounds, to hang up a couple of Shim Sham Thieves, which he got little or nothing by, in the room thereof, and likewise to give the Thief-Taker an Opportunity to rob or extort a Sum of Money out of all the rest in the Information, by making up, and compounding the Felonies with them, which by a modest Computation, cannot amount to less than a Hundred Pounds, or more, &c. Then is it not high time for the Citizens of London, and Places adjacent, to bestir themselves, when the greatest Offenders have found a way out, with the Assistance of their friend the Thief-Taker, to escape the Hand of Justice? This will give them Incouragement, and make them desperate as well as frequent in their Robberies, and what the Citizens and others, must pay dearly for, if not timely prevented, by putting a stop to the same. In short, the Thief, the Gaol, the Justice, and the King's Evidence, all of them seem to be influenced and managed by him, and at this rate none will be brought to the Gallows, but such as he thinks fit, &c. Now if Enquiry were to be made, by what means he arrived to this pitch of Preferment he now is at, you will find, that he hath been as great a Proficient in all Matters and Things that he hath hitherto engaged in.

1. Who when in a private Station, and followed the Trade of Buckle making, knew how to plate a Crown Piece as well as any that followed that Employment.

2. When he became an Evidence, did the Business skitishly, and as effectually, as any of those he now sets up.

3. When he was a Twang, *alias* followed the Tail of his Wife, a common Night Walker, no sooner had she pick'd a Pocket, and given him the Signal, by a Hem, or otherwise, but he had Impudence, and
Courage

Courage enough, to attack the Cull, until the Buttock had made her Escape.

4. When King of the Gipsies, did execute the hidden and dark part of a Stroler, to all Intents and Purposes, until in *Holbourn*, by Order of the Justice, his Skittish and Baboonish Majesty was set in the Stocks for the same.

5. Now King amongst the Thieves, and Lying Master General of *England*, Captain General of the Army of Plunderers, and Ambassador Extraordinary from the Prince of the Air, hath taken up his Residence, in an Appartment fitted up on purpose for him, in the Palace of the Q——n of H——ll, where continual Attendance is given for receiving and buying of stolen Goods, as likewise to pay back, or help the right Owners to them again, provided they will offer Money enough for the same; but if not, then doth his Excellency fly off, and give you to understand, that the Goods he hath heard of, are not yours, and that he cannot assist you, and that you may be gone about your Business, for that he will take a Sum of Money of the Thief, or dispose of the Goods some other way; certainly such a Monster in Iniquity as this, is not to be found, much less suffered in any part of the habitable World, save only in this Kingdom, and in this Infatuated City, and Places adjacent, those Places of general Corruption.

6. There being one thing more which he earnestly desires, and solicits to be employed in finding out, and setting up Evidences against the false Coiners, and then you need not doubt, but in a little time, you will have as many Coiners, as you have Thieves. O *London*, *London*! so much fam'd for thy good Order, by what means is it now come to pass, that thou art become a Receptracle for a Den of Thieves and Robbers, and all sorts of villanous Persons and Practices, &c. And here it cannot be taken amiss to examine a little into the Trade of punishing Wickedness and Vice, the same being become one of the most mysterious, profitable, and flourishing Trades now in the Kingdom. But here I must stop my Pen, draw the Curtain of Iniquity, and content my self to Examine, and that but a little neither, into the open, but unwarrantable and pernicious Practice of the Regulator. And in order thereto, I shall here take a View of him in the publick Streets, which he so much boasteth of, and fain would perswade you that he doth so much good to the Publick, by stopping the Whores, and other Persons viciously inclined, and forcibly entering the Houses of Bawdry, taking them out from thence, and committing them to Gaols, &c. And now I pray, what is the Consequence of all this? Woful Experience plainly

plainly shews, that by the ill Acquaintance and Conversation they meet with there, they learn to be Thieves, and find the way to, the Thief-Taker's Houses, set up by them on purpose to harbour and train up one Brood of Thieves under another, and to screen and save them from the Gallows, to the end that they may live by the Reversion of them, &c. And now it is the general Complaint of the Taverns, the Coffee-Houses, the Shopkeepers and others, that many of their Customers are afraid when it is dark, to come to their Houses and Shops, for fear that their Hats and Wigs should be snatch'd from off their Heads, or their Swords taken from their Sides; or that they may be blinded, knock'd down, cut or stabbed; nay, the Coaches cannot secure them, but they are likewise assaulted, cut and robbed in the publick Streets, &c. By which means the Traffick of the City is greatly interrupted, and will be much more so, if a timely and effectual Care is not taken to prevent the same, &c. And how can you suppose it to be otherwise, when there are so many publick Offices, publick and private Houses, publick Inns, and publick Shops, set up on purpose to harbour Thieves and Robbers, and carry on the basest Designs with them, to the just Reproach of this great and wealthy City, &c. And now let us see what are the Methods taken to suppress those disorderly Houses and Practices.

And here if I were to draw out, and shew you exactly the Humours and Actions in a Ken or House frequented by the Thieves and Thief-Takers, or, in their own Dialect, thoroughly Flash, I think I cannot represent it better to your View, than in the nature of a Wind-Mill, and supposing the Master of the House to answer to these four following Questions, with the greatest Truth.

Quest. Do you believe the Flash Gaming House to be one principal Cause and Supporter of the wicked Transactions, contrived and carry'd on in your House.

Ans. Yes, Sir; for had it not been for the Bites and Sharpers that depriv'd innocent People that happen'd to come there, of their Money; and the other ill Company they met with there, that taught them the ways of Robbing and Thieving, they would never have found the way, or had any occasion to use my House: from thence, Sir, I receive a continual Supply.

Quest. Do you believe the House of Bawdry to be one principal Cause and Supporter of the wicked Transactions, contrived and carry'd on in your House?

Ans. Yes, Sir; with the assistance of the Regulator, for if by a pernicious Practice, he had not taken the Whores and others from
thence,

thence, and put them into the *Work-House*, where by ill Acquaintance and Conversation they learn'd to be Thieves, &c. then by consequence they would have had no occasion to use my House: Sir, from thence I receive a continual Supply.

Quest. Do you believe the Receiver or Buyer of stolen Goods, to be one principal Cause and Supporter of the wicked Transactions, contriv'd and carry'd on in your House?

Answ. Yes, Sir. The Receiver constantly attends at my House every Day, and makes it his business to instruct and get acquaintance with all the Thieves he can, for the more Goods he receives or buys of them, the more Money he gets by them; and the Thieves come here to meet the Receiver, because they cannot go on in their ill Practices without him; the Receiver, Sir, is a principal Supporter of my House.

Quest. Do you believe the Thief-Taker to be one principal Cause and Supporter of the wicked Transactions, contriv'd and carry'd on in your House?

Answ. Yes, certainly, Sir, for most of the ill Practices of the Women, which are far the greatest Criminals, are certainly owing to the Thief-Taker; without him they could not carry on their wicked Designs, and by consequence it would not be worth their while to walk the Streets; as for all the Writings, Shop-Books, Pocket Books and other Goods, they would never steal them, if they had not a Factor to help them to Money for them. The Thief-Taker, Sir, is a great Encourager and Supporter of my House.

Quest. So then you say, That the two first are the chief Occasions, and the two last the chief Supporters of all the wicked Practices, contriv'd and carry'd on in your House?

Answ. Yes, Sir. They are the four Sails that belong to my Mill, *Never a Barrel a better Herring*: you see, Sir, the Sails go round, they follow each other, that in short, Sir, my House could not stand without them, my whole Dependance being altogether on them, it is these that bring Grist to the Mill.

Quest. But is not the Miller the Master of the Ken, a Thief, doth he not often receive or buy their stolen Goods, and wink at and carry on the basest Designs with them?

Answ. Hold Master, stick a Pin there, no Man is oblig'd to accuse himself; besides, Sir, you did not desire me to answer any more than four Questions, which you see I have done with the greatest Truth. But, Sir, I will answer you civilly, I will take care, Sir, so to regulate my Matters, as to take a Toll of all that come within the Verge of my House.



BY
His Skittish and Baboonish Majesty :

P R O C L A M A T I O N .

TH E N **W**hereas, there are several Locks, Fences, and Flash Patrons, who are Dealers as well as my self in contraband, alias stolen Goods, &c. And whereas, there hath been by my Order and special Contrivance, several skittish and felonious Informations establish'd against them, &c. And whereas the aforesaid Rebels run rudely to my indignations Will and Pleasure, and will not come down, nor suffer themselves any longer to be so frequently rob'd of their Money extorted from them; for that the aforesaid Rebels impudently and truly say, That I am as deep in the Dirt, as they are in the Mire; by compounding and making up of the aforesaid Felonies with them, &c. And altho' I dare not now take them up, and bring them to Justice for fear of my own precious and felonious Neck, &c. yet I would have them to know by these Presents; that unless they speedily comply with my graceless Will and Pleasure, and come down as aforesaid; that I will endeavour to frighten them, by giving them to understand, that I will print their Names and places of Abode, that all their Neighbours, as well as others, may know them: and if this will not have the desired Effect on them, they then may go on in their accurs'd Ways, and be damn'd if they will, for I will have nothing farther to do with them, &c. Further more, my graceless Will

Will and Pleasure is, That such of my Subjects and Servants, as have been misled and gone astray, thorough the Instigation of any of the aforesaid Offenders; by carrying of such contraband or stolen Goods to them, there to be lock'd or pawn'd, or sold as aforesaid. Be it known by these Presents, that my Will and Pleasure is, That on sight heretofore, they immediately repair to their Duty and Allegiance; and for the future, to bring such Goods to me at my Office, where they as well as others of my belov'd Subjects, shall have the greatest Encouragement and Protection, by screening them at all times, and upon all felonious occasions from Justice: and that they shall also find, that I will give more Money to pay them back to the right Owner, than you can lock, pawn or sell them for to those rebellious Receivers, &c. For instance, suppose you steal Goods to the value of twenty Pounds prime Cost; if you carry them to those Rebels, you very well know that they will not give you above nine Pounds for them at the most, which if you bring them to my Office, where continual attendance is given for such as well as all other felonious Purposes; I will give you ten Pounds for them, which will be a greater Encouragement to you, as well as Satisfaction to my self, for that I can pay them back to the right Owner as aforesaid for sixteen Pounds at least. And now let us see how the Bear-Skin is divided, viz. You will have ten Pounds, and I shall have six Pounds, and the Cull, alias the Fool, will save four Pounds, which will be an Encouragement for him and his Friend to come to my felonious Shop, so often as he shall have occasion: and that this will also give you an Encouragement frequently to visit and rob him as often as you can, and if this is not doing the Business, the Devil is in it, &c. And for your further Encouragement, be it known unto you, That if I see you taken up for any Crime, and carry'd before the Justice, I will not know you; or if I see you commit a Robbery on the Highway, or if I see you in a Shop or Ware-house, in order to steal their Goods, or assault and knock down Persons in the publick Street, or if I see you break open a House, I will not blow or disturb you, apprehend or take you. Nay, furthermore, If you should be taken in a Fact, which would certainly cast you for your Life, I will endeavour to stifle the Evidence against you, &c. But if that cannot be done, I will yet take care so to order the matter, as to set you up for an Evidence; whereby both you and your fellows my truly and well beloved Subjects and Servants, as well as my self, shall certainly escape the Gallows; in short, so long as you shall continue to serve me as aforesaid, so long you may depend on my Protection; from the most notorious Offender, to the youngest Pick-Pocket about the Town.

Given at our Court, within the Tents of Ungodliness, in the direct way to Destruction, both of Soul and Body.

MR. *Ken*, How do you do, I desire you will do me the favour, to shew my Countryman the Humours, or what is done within your House.

Ans. You know, Sir, I have been very ready at all times, and upon all Occasions to do you any Service, provided it will not be any Prejudice to my self; Sir, if your Friend pleases to walk in, he is welcome. So pulling him by the Sleeve, cries, Come in Countryman, draws a Chair, and says, Come, Sir, sit down by the Fire, I warrant it, you think my *Ken*, *alias* House a strange sort of a Place.

The Countryman staring about him, answers, Place with all my Heart; certainly, this can be no other than an Entrance into Hell, or the very Gate of it; what strange swearing, damning of their own and others Souls and Bodies, that hardly a Word proceeds from them without an Oath or Curse, what lascivious Discourse and Actions, what smoaking, and pouring down of Spirits and other Liquors; some sleeping, others staring as if their Eyes would drop out of their Heads. Indeed Mr. *Miller*, I was never in such a place before, neither did I believe any such would be suffered in any parts of his Majesty's Dominions.

Countryman. What are those Three shabby Fellows, that are talking so seriously at that Table?

Miller. They are Three House-Breakers, that are lately come out of the Whit (*alias* Newgate) they have lain there these Two Sessions, during which time, the Turn-Key has fleec'd them of all their Money, and the Fact not being fully prov'd against them, they are set at Liberty; and I suppose they are now contriving how, and where to go and get more.

Quest. What are those two dirty young Wenches, and that stout lusty young Fellow, like a Sailor?

Ans. Truly, Countryman, they a couple of Bunters, catch'd in Company with that Sailor by the Regulators, and put into the *Work-House*, and by conversing there with some of my Customers, they have learn'd the way to my House, I suppose with intent to improve; as for the Buttocks, they will turn Files, *alias* Night-walking Pick-Pockets, and the Sailor, I suppose, will join with the House-Breakers, or Foot-Pads.

Quest. What are all that heap of Boys at that Table, that are playing at Dice, Swearing, Cursing and grinning at each other, like so many Hell-Cats; and that Man in the silver button'd Coat and knotted Peruke, with a Sword by his Side, what does he do amongst them?

Ans. Sir, those Boys are all Clouters, *alias* Pick-Pockets, and that Man in the silver button'd Coat, is their Thief-Taker, to help them to Money for the Pocket-Books, Shop Books or Writings, and other Goods

Goods that they shall steal; and I suppose he is now asking them, if they have any such for him at present, or putting them in mind, that he expects to be serv'd by them for the future.

Quest. What was it you call'd the Thief-Taker to that Fellow for, that is just come into your House?

Ans. Why Countryman, to let you know, that Fellow has stolen Three Shop-Books, and left them at the Thief-Taker's House, and came here to tell him of the same; upon which, Sir, the Thief-Taker hath given him Three Half-Crowns in Hand, and a Quartern of Brandy, and tells him, that he is an honest Lad, and will give him more when he hath paid them back (*alias* return'd them to the right Owner) and it is the Custom for the Thief to have one half of the Profit, and the Thief-Taker the other.

Quest. But how do the Thieves know what the Thief-Taker gets for the Books they steal, and whether they have their Shares or not?

Ans. For that they take the Thief-Taker's Word, and oftentimes I believe, he doth not give them a tenth part.

Quest. What is that old Fellow, that goes from one Company to another, they seem to be pleas'd with what he says to them; I observe, they make a Gathering and give him Money; what, has he had any Loss lately?

Ans. No, Sir, he hath not had any Loss that I know of, unless it be of every thing that is good. You must know, Sir, that he is an old worn out Thief, that hath stood all Stories, and hath been famous in his Time, but now he is a pushing Tote, *alias* Thieves Watchman, that lies scouting in and about the City to get and bring Intelligence to the Thieves, when and where there is a Push, *alias* an accidental Crowd of People, that they may be there to pick Pockets, which is the occasion of his coming at this time, and of their collecting Money for him; it seems, that his Grace the Archbishop of York is to preach a Charity Sermon on Sunday next in the City.

Quest. What are those three young Lads, that have got new Cloaths on: I find they eat and drink well; I see they have a couple of Fowls, and a Bottle of Wine before them; and the Thief-Taker is now gone in unto them, seems to lay something to their Charge, and swears he can prove it; but the young Lads swear as fast as he, that they know nothing of the Matter, but they have promised to be civil to the Thief-Taker before they part, and have called for a fresh Bottle to make him drink; pray what is it they mean by being civil to the Thief-Taker?

Answer. Those three young Lads, altho' they are young, yet they are Boman Prigs, and are such as go on the Lay call'd the Dub, that enter a House, Shop or Ware-House, with a Pick-lock key, and having lately spoke,

spoke, and that roundly too (*alias* committed a Robbery) in Money and Goods to the value of 120*l.* for which they have promis'd to be civil to the Thief-Taker; that is, he will get a sum of Money out of them, and something of the Receiver, and then the matter will be over, and at an End.

Quest. Are not those two young Women, that sit at yonder Table, the two Bunters, that you was telling me of, that were taken up by the Regulators, and sent to the *Work-House*; I see they are now very neat and clean, and have tolerable good Cloaths on their Backs, and what is that Man that is in Company with them, I see they drink *Geneva* like Fishes?

Answ. If you remember, Sir, I told you, that it was my Opinion they were inclinable to turn Files, (*alias* Pick-Pockets) which it seems has proved true, for the Night before last, they met with, and pick'd up a Merchant's Book Keeper, who went along with them to the Tavern, and while he was gratifying his vicious Inclinations, they pick'd his Pocket of Ten Guineas in Money, and of his Pocket-Book, in which was an *Exchequer-Bill* of 100*l.* that Man drinking *Geneva* with them is their trapping Thief-Taker, and he hath it, which, if ever the Cull gets out of their Hands again, he must pay dearly for it, for they know how to dispose of it.

Quest. What is that Man that whisper'd to the Woman, that sat smoaking her Pipe by the Fireside? I see she hath call'd for a quartern of Brandy for him, which they drink off, she seeming to smile, and to be well pleas'd, and they are now gone away together.

Answ. He is one that belongs to a Gang of House-Breakers; what, do you not know him again, he is one of the three that sat at that Table in such a shabby and thoughtful manner, as you was pleas'd to take notice of the other Day; I understand that last Night they broke open a House, and brought away abundance of Goods of several sorts, which they have carried to that Woman's House; and this Man that she is gone along with, came to fetch her home to buy them.

Quest. What are those two Gentlemen in their long Perukes and Swords by their Sides, and those three Gentlewomen with furbelow'd Scarves, I see they live well, they have got a Leg of Pork and Turnips, with Pease-Pudding, and a dish of roasted Fowls for their Dinner; I observe they drink Wine and Brandy plentifully; I find the Women smoak as well as the Men; I fancy those are very good Customers, by reason they have the best Room, and clean Linnen, and the most diligent attendance of any in your House?

Answ. Why, *Countryman*, those are one of the Battalions of Pick-Pockets, for so they call themselves; I have the other Battalion in another Room, and they din'd here likewise: they had a Leg of Mutton boyl'd,

Boyl'd with a Dish of Turnips, and a Goose with a couple of wild Ducks for their Dinner, and they are now smoaking their Pipes, and washing it down with good Wine and Brandy; and then one Battalion goes to the *Royal Chapel*, and the other to the *Ambassadours*; and as soon as Church is done, they will return hither again, and drink a quartern of Brandy, and a Bottle or two of Wine a piece, and then they will part, and not meet again until *Tuesday* Morning at nine of the Clock, when one Company goes to *Salters-Hall*, and the other to *Pinner's-Hall* Lectures, at which places for the most part they greatly benefit; either by a Suit (*alias*) Gold-Watch, or two or three Cloaks, *alias* Gold-Watch Cases; or by a Wedge Lobb, *alias* Gold or silver Snuff Box, or else by ready Money.

Quest. What is the meaning of the old Fellow coming again in such haste, that he is all in a Sweat, with his Hat under his Arm, whispering something to all the Companies at each Table, as he goes along; at which I observe, that they all fling down their Pipes and Cards, and are in such a Hurry, that they will not stay to play their Games out: they are ready to run over and push one another down, they are in such haste to get out; I hope there is no danger of the House falling.

Answ. No, Sir, there is no danger of the House falling, the reason why they are in such haste is, old *Paul* hath brought them News, that his Majesty is just going to the Parliament-House, which will occasion a Push, *alias* a great Concourse of People, and they go there to pick Pockets, they will soon be there, some in Coaches, and others in Boats, and I question not, but amongst them, they may bring from thence in Money and Goods to the value of several hundreds of Pounds.

Quest. Hark! What is the meaning of all this Hollowing, what is the King coming this way? a noise at the Door, saying, stop Coachman, pulls down the Window, out comes a Man all over wet, with his Hat and Peruke hanging about his Ears, and runs up Stairs; there is several hundreds of the Mobb hollowing after the Coach. 'Tis pity that such Houses should be suffer'd, but that they were pulled down, or set on fire: and burnt to the Ground, with all the Vermin that is in it.

Answ. Why, Countryman, this Man was Snitcht, *alias* he went to pick a Gentleman's Pocket, and the Gentleman felt him, and deliver'd him up to the Mob, to give him such Punishment as they should think fit; upon which they took him to the Horse-pond, and made him Duck or Dive seven or eight times; then they took him to the *Thames*, and made him Duck twice more to wash himself, they then suffer'd him to take Coach, and did him the Honour to attend him hither, hollowing him all the way he came; so that you see, Countryman, if they will fish, sometimes they must catch a *Frog*;

Quest. Who are those two Motherly Women that are gone up Stairs, and what is that Woman one of them spoke to, as they pass'd by?

Ans. Those two Women are Shop-Lifters, and I find they have this Afternoon, lifted or stole a piece of Silk to the value of 25 L. and that Woman they spoke to as they pass'd by, is a Lock, *alias* Receiver and Buyer of stolen Goods, and they have brought it hither for her to buy it of them; for which piece of Silk, she hath given them 12 L.

Quest. What are those four Men that are Booted and Spurr'd, with their Whips in their Hands; I observe, that they sent their Horses away, I suppose home?

Ans. Those four Men have been in several Counties to attend the Elections of Parliament Men, and have brought off in Money, Watches, and other Goods, to the value of 112 L. to each Man's share, which they have just now divided, and are come to my Ken to spend some part of it.

Quest. What is that Gentleman that is come in Booted and Spurr'd, with his Whip in his Hand; I observe he hath sent away his Horse likewise?

Ans. That Man hath been the Circuit with the Judges, and has had the worse Success that ever poor Man had; for the Court was no sooner sat, but this poor Fellow-man, unfortunately bit a Gentleman of his Gold Watch, and was catch'd in the Fact, and the Watch taken upon him in Court, and he being known to be an old Practitioner, will certainly be cast and top'd, *alias* hang'd for the same: Countryman, I tell you what I say to you, that there is not a more honest or better File, *alias* Pick-Pocket, ever went abroad than he was; and I have heard his Fellowman say, that he never sunk him of a Farthing, and they have gone together 30 Years on this Lay: Poor Jack, I shall greatly miss him, for he was a good Customer to me, by spending much of his Crop at my House.

Quest. What are those five Women that are sighing and crying as if they would break their Hearts?

Ans. Sir, their Husbands or Fellowmen, lye Cast for their Lives, and are to be executed to Morrow; but hang them, let them alone, they will get others in their room, in a Day or two.

Quest. Do you believe the Regulator doth any Service to the City, by his way of filching the Whores and other Persons viciously inclin'd?

Ans. Sir, the very same Service that a Fox doth when he getteth into a Hen Roost.

Quest. Do you believe the Thief-Taker doth any Service to the City, by his way of managing Thieves, and such as come to him for Assistance?

Ans. The same Service that a hungry Wolf doth, when he getteth into a Fold of Sheep?

Quest. At whose Request was it, that between 40 and 50 Robberies were left out in the skittish Information? who was it that Receiv'd the

Goods

Goods, and what is the Reason that they were not return'd to the right Owner? and how comes it to pass, that the Informant is so uneasy at the same?

Ans. Sir, as to the latter part of the Question, should any of his Companions in Wickedness impeach him, the said Informant, that he will be hanged for so doing; and as to the former part of the Question, I think it is plain to all that read it.

Quest. Do you not think, but that it is possible to find a Way out, to suppress those numbers of disorderly Houses and Persons?

Ans. Sir, It is my fixed Opinion, that if ever the same be done, your Friend the City Marshal will be the Man that doth it, for that he is entirely free from all their evil Practices; and I dare be bold to say, that if the Four Freedoms which the City giveth to the Regulator and the Watchmen at the City Gates, were given to your Friend the said Marshal for his Guard and Expences, &c. that neither I, nor any other Persons, which keep such ill Houses as I do, or that carry on evil Designs with Thieves and Robbers, &c. should be suffer'd any longer in the City, nor in any part of his Majesty's Dominions. Nay, I dare to say further, that he knoweth how to weaken and divide us, so as that he should soon bring Thief and Receiver to that degree of Uneasiness, that they will be glad to turn their Byass another way: to wit, to their honest Trades and Employments that they were formerly brought up to. And now let us see what are the Methods taken to suppress those disorderly Practices.

1. The City-Watches are defective, and many of the Watchmen are corrupted, and will not apprehend disorderly Persons, when they catch them in disorderly Practices, nor bring them before the Constable of the Night, because there is more got by conniving at them.

2. Your Peace Officers are discouraged, and will not exert themselves in their Office, for fear that the afore said disorderly Persons should be encouraged, and put in a way, to bring Actions against them for doing their Duty, which will be attended with Charge and Trouble to defend the same.

3. Your Regulator maketh bad worse, by committing them to Goals, where they get acquainted with, and learn to be Thieves.

4. The Evening Watches at the City-Gates, do no manner of Service to the City, and by consequence signifie no more than a Chip in Porrage.

5. The Thief-Taker is a Thief-maker, and hath likewise found out a way to pervert the good Intention of the Act of Parliament, which was designed to break the Knots of Thieves and Robbers, by making them Evidences against each other; and this he doth by either stifling or setting up an Evidence of his own chusing, by which means the greatest Criminals, as well as himself, escape the Hand of Justice.

6. Your excellent City Precept, for want of Incouragement, is laid

aside, and of no more use than waste Paper ; in short, there is not any one Method yet put in Practice, to put a stop, much less to reform and suppress that Torrent of Debaucheries, which at this time, like a Flood-Gate, is pouring in upon you.

Quest. What are those three stout rugged Fellows that sit at yonder Table ; I observe they have Pistols in their Pockets, and are full of Money, every now and then they pull out a Watch, and all three look on it and whisper, and wink to each other in a sort of Cant, which I find they all understand.

Answ. Those Three Fellows are Foot-Pads, and I suppose have been out all Night upon Business, and I fancy they have had Success, for they have order'd a Goose to be got ready for their Breakfasts. Hark ! what is the meaning of this noise and clutter ? Which Words occasion all that are in the House to stand up, and seem'd to be in the utmost Confusion ; in bolts a Constable, with a short Staff in one Hand, and a Warrant in the other, and five stout Men along with him ; staring and gazing round the Room, and making up immediately to the Three Foot-Pads to seize them, which occasions one of the Foot-Pads to fire a Pistol, which kill'd one of the Constables Assistance, upon which the Constable orders their Hands to be ty'd behind them, and to be all search'd and disarm'd ; taking from them the Arms they had about them, and the Watch and Money they had robb'd for the Night before ; all the rest being struck with a panick Fear, go sneaking out of the House as fast as they can, upon which Mr. Miller addresses himself to Mr. Constable in very civil and obliging Terms, thus. Pray, Mr. Constable, and the Gentlemen with you, let me intreat you to sit down and be easy ; Indeed, Mr. Constable, this noise does me a great Diskindness in blowing of my House after this manner : all the Street is now in an Uproar, I believe there is 500 People at my Door.

Constable. Blow your House with a witness ; your House ought with you and all your Attendance to be blown up together. I do not at all question, if all the rest that were here were to be examin'd, but that I should have found them on Proof, all Rogues and Whores, and to deserve the same Fate, those Men in a little time will have.

Miller. Pray, Mr. Constable, don't be in such a Passion, pray sit down, and the rest of the Gentlemen with you. Here, bring a couple of Bottles of Wine.

Countryman. Here, pray, Mr. Miller, pray, for the Lord's Sake give me Change, that I may be gone, I shall be taken up for a Rogue, by being found in this ugly House.

Miller. Sir, you may be easy and sit quietly, you have done no ill, therefore no body will meddle with or hurt you.

Countryman.

Countryman. Give me my Change, I say, for I am all in a Sweat. I would not stay in your House an Hour longer, if you would give me *5* *l*. It is true what the Constable said, that your House ought to be blown about your Ears; for my part I wonder it is suffer'd; and I wish I had never come into it, for I do not believe it safe for any to do so. I profess I have not seen any one, that looks like an honest Person, come into your House since I have been here, save Mr. Constable and his Assistants who came to take those Rogues.

Miller. Give him his Change, I shall be more plagu'd with this Fool, that I get nothing by, than with all the rest: What, are you going away with them, Mr. Constable? pray, Sir, do not mention anything to the Justice against my House, if you should, Sir, I shall be indicted, which will be a great Charge and Trouble to me: Pray, Mr. Constable, I beg of you, that you will not, I shall be glad to drink a Bottle with you another time, good Sir, — so away they go with a Train of 500 People after them.

And now I shall here take a View of the City Pounds, those Slaughter Houses of Debauchery, where they knock down Sin, as a Butcher doth an Ox; and thereby to the Scandal of the City, do they quarter iniquity, like unto a fatted Calf; wherein is tragically acted, the Game called the Skiller, *alias* Jugglecat, *alias* Rob-Thief, and others by those famous Comedians, the Regulator and the Thief-Taker: the supernumerary Persons set up for the more effectual, *alias* more profitable way of punishing, *alias* increasing and encouraging Wickedness and Vice, which take the greatest Care by every Step they take to make Business, that they may have Business to do, the Consequence of which Proceedings plainly proves the Fact; and now the numbers of disorderly Houses and Persons being so many, and their Crimes so great, that it would puzzle the nicest Critick, to know how or where to begin, so as to reform and suppress them, &c.

1. The Judges complain and say, that they are tir'd with the Thoughts of coming to the *Sessions-House*; for that instead of finding their numbers lessen'd thereby, to their great Grief and Surprise, the oftner they come, the more they find.

2. The Clergy complain and say, that they do what lieth in their Power to preach against Sin and Wickedness in general; but know not how to prescribe a Cure for such disorderly Persons and Practices, for that they do not understand their dark Sayings, and their Ways to them are past finding out; and that they do believe it to be more properly the Business of the Justices.

The People likewise complain to the Justices for help and Relief, and the Justices give them for answer, that the Laws are defective, and so

are like to continue for any thing that I can yet see to the contrary ; and now what turn can I give to my Pen, to stir up and awaken you to this absolute Necessity ? Consider within your selves, to what a height of Wickedness they are arriv'd at ; doth not the devouring Wolf, the Thief-Catcher, in a manner snatch your Children from their Mother's Breasts, and train them up, and instruct them in the Methods of Robbing and Thieving, and thereby bring them, in the bitter Agonies of their Souls, to a shameful and untimely End : for the serious Thoughts and Reflection of which you go mourning all your Days, while he the said Thief-Taker, rides with them in Triumph to the fatal Tree, &c. And here I must plainly tell you, That if ever this would be cured, it must thus be laid open and search'd to the bottom, and like an honest and a skilful Pilot, those fatal Rocks must be sought out and shewn you which by woful Experience so many have split upon : to wit, the aforesaid Receivers of stolen Goods, &c. Therefore delay not the time, but think in good earnest of the Honour of the City, and the Peace and Safety of the Citizens, before the evil Days come, when you shall say, that you will take no Pleasure to travel the Roads by Day, nor to walk the Publick Streets by Night, for fear of the aforesaid notorious Offenders ; they having now so riveted and fix'd themselves in the City and Places adjacent, which if a speedy and due Care be not taken, the Citizens must be under an indispensable Obligation, whatsoever Charges they shall be at, to have a Guard to patrol and clear the Streets ; and by Consequence it is also to be fear'd, another Guard to look after that, and so on. And now methinks do I see you in the most despairing manner, looking upon each other, and not knowing what Course to take ; saying to each other, What Reward can be great enough for him that can find out the way to reform and suppress those numbers of dangerous and incorrigible Rogues and night walking Pick-Pockets, which continually pester the Streets, and that his Name ought to be written in Gold, that can effect and bring to pass the same.

1. There be some which say, were they but made Scavengers to sweep and clean the Streets, they cannot but think it might have so good an Effect on them, as to put a stop, if not totally to suppress them.

2. Others there be that say, Had they but some Mark of Infamy fix'd on them, that this would certainly do the Business.

3. Others there be, that offer their Opinion and say, had we but more Work-Houses erected, and that something could be found out, the Product of Great Britain, the Profit of which Labour would maintain them therein, that this would effectually suppress the same, &c. In these and the like manner do many People offer their Opinions, and I must here tell them, that yet they are all of them wide of the Mark, and that there is a way, and but one neither, that will effectually stop and reform and suppress the same, viz. The pulling down and suppressing the aforesaid different Receivers of stolen Goods, which are the real Occasioners and Supporters of these dreadful Misfortunes ; Knock but away those Pillars of Debauchery, and the whole Fabrick of Robbing and Thieving, with other disorderly Persons and Practices, will all of them immediately give way and fall of Course. In the finding

finding out of this Secret, I have spent my Hat full of Money, and not only run the Risque of my own Reputation thereby, but that of my Life also; and that for all the aforesaid Expences, I have not yet had so much as one single Farthing allow'd me by the City, for this or any other Charges that I have hitherto been at in the Execution of my Office, which I take to be hard Usage, and that for the future you will be pleas'd to consider and relieve the same, &c. And here I will again be bold to affirm, That there is a way to suppress the aforesaid Receivers, and in the doing of which, the City may be put to very little or no more Charges than now it is at, &c. And in order thereto, what if your City Marshal should here endeavour to tread in the Steps of *Elisha*, by sending this Messenger in this manner unto you, and instead of receiving the same, the following Answer should be made, *viz.* Are not *Arbana* and *Pharpar* Rivers in *Damascus* better Waters, than all the Waters in *Israel*? are not those Men that pretend so much to Religion, that we see continually with lifted up Hands and Eyes in the Sanctuary, are not those Persons rather to be depended on and encourag'd than the common Peace-Officers, who, as they tell us, are subject to Corruption; and peradventure, read not a Chapter in the *Bible* above once a Week. To which I answer, that gilded Apples have oftentimes rotten Cores, neither can every honest Man make a Watch, no more than the aforesaid pretended Regulators with their Sieve of Vaniry, can stop the Tide at *London-Bridge*; and likewise, that the Stream never runs so smooth, as when it runs in its proper Channel, &c. And now what if your Servant the aforesaid Marshal should have come nearer unto you, and have ask'd you to do some great thing: to wit, to build more *Work-Houses*, and to employ more Regulators and Thief-Takers in order to suppress the same, would you not have done it? how much rather then when he saith, only wash and be clean, and purge out from amongst you, the aforesaid five different sorts of Receivers of stolen Goods; together with the pretended Regulators, who like unto *Sampson's* Foxes, have fire Brands fix'd to their Tails, &c. for then, and not till then, the City and the Kingdom will be clean from the Leprosy of Robbing and Thieving, which by their means hath overspread the same, &c. then for the sake of Virtue, the Honour of the City, and the Peace and Safety of the Citizens; for my Brethren and Companions Sakes to whom I wish the greatest Prosperity, &c. and from the skittish and pernicious Practice of the Regulator, of whom the City hath had nothing but noise for their Money, and they must and will go out like unto the snuff of a Candle, and from the felonious and abominable Practice of the pretended Thief Taker and his Brethren in Iniquity; yea, from all such as make it a Trade skittishly to punish, alia, increase and encourage Wickedness and Vice, &c. Good Lord, good Lord deliver us: and now think me not, treat me not as an Enemy, for thus plainly telling you the Truth, neither suffer me to become a Sacrifice to the savage Jaws of the devouring Wolf, the Thief Taker and his infernal Crew, for want of a reasonable Allowance for a Guard, for the Safety of my Person; for you cannot otherwise think, but that by this Treatment of them, I have aggravated them to Revenge, and laid my self open, and as a Mark to be shot at, by the most vile Persons upon the Earth, which are apparently debauch'd both in Principle and Practice; and what is it but such wicked

wicked Wretches as those will do, especially when they are thoroughly satisfied, as they needs must be, that I am now a going about it in good earnest to suppress them, by thus laying the Ax to the Root of the Tree, for which they already threaten me with Stink Pots, Fire brands, Arrows, Death, &c. St. Paul telleth you, *That after the manner of Men, he fought with Beasts at Ephesus*, and I here likewise tell you, that if ever this truly good and dangerous Work be done effectually, that I must in a manner fight with Men like unto Devils, &c. And I do here, in the most publick and solemn manner declare, that I am entirely free from all the aforesaid evil Persons and Practices, as having nothing to do with them, otherwise than to punish them, and so to punish them, as will certainly end in the Reformation of their Lives.

And now it may be here said, that I have laid open the Wound, but where is the Cure, &c. To which I answer, that I have writ another Book which I have dedicated to the King, and that if I understand any thing of the matter which I have been treating about, the same will effectually answer your Expectation; for that it will dash Thief and Receiver like two Pitchers, one against another, insomuch that they shall not dare to trust or have any thing to do with each other, and that I have all the reason in the World to believe, that the Wisdom of the Nation will come in to it, for that it will not put them to Three Pence Charge: but as the burnt Child dreads the Fire, as certainly you may depend upon it, that I will take such Care, that the aforesaid Book shall not be sentenced and damned for want of a due Consideration; neither shall it be stifled and lock'd up in the eternal Chest, by the Art and Contrivance of any under Spur Leather whatsoever. But as I am an Officer to serve this Honourable City, if the four worthy Gentlemen which represent the same in Parliament, shall think it worth their while to move the House, that a Committee may be appointed to examine it; that I will not fail in all Humility to attend them therewith, when they in their Wisdom shall be pleas'd to demand the same; and I question not, but with the Blessing of Almighty God's assisting those my hearty and sincere Endeavours, but in a great measure to accomplish and bring to pass the aforesaid truly good Work so much desired by all good People, to wit, the Reformation and Suppression of villanous Persons and Practices, &c.

I understand that there is a Bill now depending in Parliament for the same good End and Purpose, but if I am rightly inform'd of the Methods therein to be taken, in my humble Opinion the same will fall far short of your Expectation, in as much as it will not stop the Springs, purifie the Fountains, and pull down the Uphold-

ers of Debauchery: to wit, the aforesaid five different sort of Receivers, for you may entirely depend upon it, that unless you can suppress the Receiver, you never will destroy the Thief; and if I am rightly inform'd also, the Thief-Takers have already found out a way to set aside the good Effect of the said Bill, before the same shall appear amongst them, &c. But to conclude, I here tell you, that I have not easily been prevail'd upon to undertake this great Task, being thoroughly sensible of the Dirt and the Danger which will attend the same, and that not only from the aforesaid Thieves and Robbers, but likewise from the under hand side Wind, and malicious Stroaks of all such as have any Interest in them, for they well know, that if this take Effect, and be encourag'd as it ought, that their whole Craft will not only be in the utmost danger, but that it must, and will be totally ruined and destroy'd thereby, to the unspeakable Joy and Satisfaction of all such as are Lovers of Truth, Peace, and Righteousness.

*To the Gentlemen for Reformation of Manners, for
whom I have the greatest Esteem.*

Gentlemen, I would not here be thought to persuade you to put a stop, much less to lay aside your truly good and generous Design, although through the unskilful, or other Management of those Persons that you have hitherto employ'd, the same hath not had the desired Effect, to wit, the Reformation of disorderly Persons and Practices, and certainly, there never was a greater occasion for it, than at this present time; and in order thereto, be then persuaded to take the following Advice, and put away from you that little Leaven of Vain Glory, which leaveneth the whole Lump, which ask and receive it not, because they ask amiss, that they may consume it upon their Lusts in the Flames of a skittish Practice, and a vain glorious Zeal; in short, you must not set up one Evil to put down another, you must not do Evil that Good may come of it, if you will expect God's Blessing on the same. Gentlemen, they induce you to believe hard and uncharitable Thoughts of others, and will do no manner of Good themselves, by which means your generous and truly

truly good Intention is wholly frustrated; for on the strictest Inquiry, I cannot find, by all the Punishments that have by their means, been inflicted on those unhappy People, so much as one single Person of them that is reformed, and made better thereby; but on the contrary much worse, which is manifest to all. To give you an Instance of this, Gentlemen, would you not think me strangely infatuated, if I should chuse a blind Man to direct me, or an unskilful Physician to cure me; which in Charity to them, and for your better Information, as well as the Publick Good of this whole City, I will take to be the Case at this time. But if they should answer and say otherwise, to wit, That they do see, and know the way, not only to put a stop, but likewise to restore and suppress those Floods of ungodly and disorderly People, which at this time make the Citizens and others so uneasy, and afraid to walk the publick Streets, &c. I say, should they make this Answer, then are they wholly left without Excuse, and it must be concluded by all, that they have not acted the part of good and sincere Christians, as they promised and ought to have done, but on the contrary, have they basely and treacherously betrayed the great Trust by you reposed in them. But to conclude, and that you may yet have the Honour, and attain the great End by you so much sought after, and by Good Men of all Persuasions so much hoped for and desired, to wit, The Reformation of all Villanous Persons and Practices, &c. and in order thereto, let me here intreat you once more, to purge out from amongst you the Spirit of Pride, Partiality, Vain Glory and Conceit, that lyeth hid, and is yet lurking at the Bottom, which hath hitherto not only hindred, but spoiled this your generous Intention; and in the room thereof, take in the Spirit of Charity, the undoubted Badge, and sure Pledge of a good Christian; I say, let this Preheminency be once settled, and the Work is half done; nay, it is ever at your Door waiting, and earnestly expecting the happy Invitation, which will occasion a universal Joy throughout the whole Nation, even from the King himself, to the meanest Subject; this will bring you true Honour, and will be attended with solid Comfort at the last; the present Age will be bound to pray for you, and Generations to come will call you blessed.

